



National Brownfields Assessment Pilot

New Orleans, LA

Outreach and Special Projects Staff (5101)

Quick Reference Fact Sheet

EPA's Brownfields Economic Redevelopment Initiative is designed to empower States, communities, and other stakeholders in economic redevelopment to work together in a timely manner to prevent, assess, safely clean up, and sustainably reuse brownfields. A brownfield is a site, or portion thereof, that has actual or perceived contamination and an active potential for redevelopment or reuse. Between 1995 and 1996, EPA funded 76 National and Regional Brownfields Assessment Pilots, at up to \$200,000 each, to support creative two-year explorations and demonstrations of brownfields solutions. EPA is funding more than 27 Pilots in 1997. The Pilots are intended to provide EPA, States, Tribes, municipalities, and communities with useful information and strategies as they continue to seek new methods to promote a unified approach to site assessment, environmental cleanup, and redevelopment.

BACKGROUND

EPA selected the City of New Orleans for a Brownfields Pilot. New Orleans is located at the foot of the Chemical Corridor and has an abundance of port, rail, and highway systems that transport high volumes of hazardous materials. There are numerous brownfields throughout the City which have significant impacts on local communities, many of which are minority communities (over 65% of New Orleans' population is African-American).

Prior to its induction into the Brownfields program, New Orleans had not taken an inventory of its brownfields or evaluated them to determine which could be profitably redeveloped. As a result, lenders, investors, and developers had little information with which to decide whether to locate on brownfields in New Orleans, forcing many to continue to choose the surrounding suburbs as sites for investment. The EPA cooperative agreement will partially fund a brownfields inventory and ranking project. The project is a critical tool in the effort to rebuild New Orleans.

OBJECTIVES

The primary focus of the Pilot is to develop an inventory of brownfields in New Orleans to serve as a blueprint for city planners, developers, and inves-

PILOT SNAPSHOT



New Orleans, Louisiana

Date of Award:
September 1995

Amount: \$200,000

Site Profile: The Pilot targets the creation and maintenance of a brownfields site inventory, and the performance of community outreach activities.

Contacts:

Lisa Maack
City of New Orleans
(504) 565-8114

Monica Smith
U.S. EPA - Region 6
(214) 665-6735
smith.monica@
epamail.epa.gov

Visit the EPA Brownfields Website at:
<http://www.epa.gov/brownfields>

tors interested in reclaiming land for industrial or business use. The Pilot project also seeks to improve the environmental quality of socio-economically disadvantaged communities in New Orleans. The Pilot objectives will be realized by identifying the brownfields, developing criteria for ranking their economic redevelopment potential, preparing a basic cleanup process for priority sites, and generating redevelopment strategies. The City is working to create redevelopment plans for these sites.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND ACTIVITIES

The Pilot has:

- Identified the City's top 10 brownfields properties based on economic redevelopment potential. The City is working to create redevelopment plans for these sites;
- Developed community outreach processes which incorporated measures to ensure that citizens in affected communities will have a voice in electing a representative to the brownfields consortium;
- Sponsored and conducted consortium member meetings, comprised of lenders, developers, city planners, agency officials, and citizens, to explore assessment and remediation funding mechanisms; and
- Conducted a Brownfields Site Demonstration on three properties within the City. The purpose of the demonstration was to test new procedures and methodologies that will allow faster and less expensive site assessments for brownfields properties.

The Pilot is:

- Conducting a planning process for the maintenance of an inventory, using the City's GIS system for data collection and analysis; and
- Planning to hold town meetings to ensure citizens have a voice regarding future land use prior to redevelopment of properties.

LEVERAGING OTHER ACTIVITIES

Experience with the New Orleans Pilot has been a catalyst for related activities including the following.

- Initiated planning for the creation of an EPA Brownfields Cleanup Revolving Loan Fund.
- A national model to speed up and reduce the cost of site assessments, planning and cleanup activities may be developed.